Pandemic can't halt Joe's Easter egg hunt

PAGE E1

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Battelle plan could cut mask shortage

Holly Zachariah
The Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

As the number of coronavirus cases continued to grow Saturday, Gov. Mike DeWine pleaded with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to immediately approve an emergency-use permit for a potentially game-changing invention from Columbus-based research lab Battelle that could help with the shortage of masks for health-care workers.

Battelle has developed a system that it says will sanitize as many as 160,000 used face masks a day in Ohio, which would ease the shortage for health-care workers during this pandemic because the masks could be reused rather than discarded.

"This would significantly and very, very quickly boost our capacity," DeWine

See BATTELLE, Page A13

Inside & online

- **More on the virus:** A3-4, A13-15, A17, A19-20, B1-2, B4, B8-9, C1-2, C4, D1-2, D7, E1, E3
- As a public service, virus coverage on Dispatch.com is presented at no charge.

DOGGONE CAUTIOUS

Everybody is taking precautions against contracting the novel coronavirus in central Ohio, but this might be going a bit far. Sharon Cook, who was reading the newspaper Friday while her cat Mr. Squeaks sat on the steps at her German Village home, said she didn't know who provided her dog statue with a face mask.

[ERIC ALBRECHT/DISPATCH]

Central Ohio hospitals stand ready for virus surge

Max Filby
The Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Dr. Matthew Exline barely saw another person as he walked the halls of Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center last week.

Waiting rooms were mostly empty and Exline, medical director of the medical intensive-care unit, joked that he took his first-ever solo ride in an elevator at the hospital.

The medical center has about 16,000 employees spread over more than 7 million square feet in 100-plus buildings. But last week, it was mostly empty as officials at the Wexner Medical Center and hospitals across the region prepare for an expected surge in coronavirus patients.

"It's eerily quiet," Exline said. "I was in the hospital seeing patients and it feels very empty."

Hospitals across central Ohio have

See HOSPITALS, Page A15

Hot spots grow in middle America

Kat Stafford and Martha Irvine
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — The coronavirus continued its unrelenting spread across the United States, pummeling major cities like New York, Detroit, New Orleans and Chicago, where an infant that tested positive for the virus died Saturday. It made its way, too, into rural America, where hot spots erupted in ski havens in the Rockies and small towns in the Midwest.

See HOT SPOTS, Page A14

Relatives getting creative to talk with their elders

Sheridan Hendrix
The Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

There was a 50% chance of rain Friday afternoon, but that wasn't going to stop Cindy Young from visiting her dad.

"I'll just bring my umbrella," Young said. "Just goes to show you what these times are like."

Young normally stops by Inniswood Village senior living community in Westerville on her way home from work a few times a week to see him. Her dad, 92-year-old Colin Dill, relies on Young to organize his pill box and bring over his favorite snacks.

See ELDERS, Page A4

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